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Spy, Envoy's Wife in Capital in Same Years

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WASHINGTON—Both Soviet KGB officer Vitaly Yurchenko and the woman identified as his lover, Valentina Yereskovsky, spent four years in Washington in the late 1970s while Yurchenko and Yereskovsky's husband held Soviet Embassy posts, according to diplomatic records on file at the State Department.

The records appear to bolster accounts of a failed romance—climaxed by a disastrous CIA-sponsored rendezvous last month in Montreal—that led a despondent Yurchenko to end a three-month stay with American intelligence officials and return to Soviet custody last week.

The reports have fueled criticism of the way the CIA dealt with Yurchenko, a man they have called the No. 2 official for the KGB's North American espionage operations.

The vice chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, Sen. Patrick J. Leahy (D-Vt.), said Tuesday that the CIA handled Yurchenko "very, very poorly" and that there is an "absolute need to look at how they handle defectors."

The Senate committee later said it has expanded its inquiry into the Yurchenko affair, asking the White House not only an account of the CIA's role but also for details of other agencies' contacts with the

KGB officer.

Diplomatic rosters at the State Department show that Yereskovsky and her husband, Alexander S. Yereskovsky, arrived in Washington in mid-1975 and left in late 1979 for Canada. He was moved from the Soviet Embassy post of first secretary to counselor during the period and later became consul general at the Soviet Consulate in Montreal.

The CIA has said Yurchenko came to Washington in August, 1975, and left for a Moscow KGB post in August, 1980, holding the embassy post of first secretary.

Administration sources contend that Yurchenko and Valentina Yereskovsky met in Washington and later carried on their romance in Moscow, during the long vacations she took there.

Little is known about the Yereskovskys, said by neighbors and associates to be a pleasant and affectionate couple with two children in the Soviet Union. She is said to be a pediatrician and is described as an attractive brunette or dark blonde of medium height.

A former doorman at the Yereskovskys' Montreal apartment building, Clement Brouillette, said Tuesday that the wife left her apartment for long periods almost daily and traveled alone to the Soviet Union for one or two months

last spring.

The Soviet Consulate in Montreal refused to answer reporters' inquiries but issued a statement in Valentina Yereskovsky's name calling reports of the affair "nothing but lies and slander."

Leahy, questioned after a luncheon speech Tuesday, was sharply critical of the CIA's handling of Yurchenko, who purportedly had sought American asylum in August and spent three months under CIA guard before walking out of a Georgetown restaurant on Nov. 2 to return to the Soviet compound in Washington.

"I think this one was handled very, very poorly, and I think we'd better find out just how it was," he said. "If he's a true defector and then redefected, then somebody handled it poorly. If he wasn't a defector—if he was really a double agent—then that's even worse, because he could pass the screening process."

Michael Wines reported from Washington and Maura Dolan from Montreal.